

ABOUT

ASIFA was founded in 1960 in Annecy, France by a group of international animators to increase world-wide visibility of animated film. ASIFA's membership includes animation professionals and fans from more than 50 countries.

ASIFA-East, based in New York City, is the Northeast chapter. We host screenings, workshops, and panel discussions on all things animation, and our film festival, which debuted in 1969, is the oldest animation-only festival in the US.

BOARD MEMBERS

President: Douglas Vitarelli, asifaeastpresident@gmail.com

Secretary: Liz Van Verth, secretaryasifaeast@gmail.com

Treasurer: Emily Compton, asifaeasttreasurer@gmail.com

Social Media Director: Ronan Madden

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Technology Manager: Emily Compton, asifaeast.webmgr@gmail.com

International Board Member: Ryan Castrillo

Board Member: Josué Agustin Advincola

Board Member: Christi Bertelsen

Board Member: Ray Kosarin

Board Member: Candy Kugel

Board Member: Bill Lorenzo

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FIND US ONLINE

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September 2025



still from *Just One Peek* by Mulan Fu

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

According to **Howard Beckerman's** essay (on our website), this is our 60th year. Being the same age, I can tell you that time doesn't diminish passion. So while we took some time off this summer, we didn't take it all off. And neither did our friends.

Bill Plympton and **Signe Baumann** have curated "Made in New York: Best of NYC Indie Animation" which will screen at the Metrograph. **Yvonne Grzenkiewicz** of Animation Nights New York has continued to curate and screen her events, now on program #108. **Tom Eaton**, animation professor at Kingsborough Community College, received an ASIFA-Hollywood Animation Educator's Forum Faculty Grant, Buzzco's **Candy Kugel** continued to hire interns, more than 50 over the years, to help train the next generation, **Ronan Madden** organized our first figure drawing session at Horner, **Terrence Mason** hosted the head of the Canary Islands Animayo animation festival and, last but not least, Robby Gilbert's book "New York Animation 1966-1999" has been released.

Mike Enright went to Annecy and **Jackie Ross** went to Zagreb where they represented ASIFA-East at the international meetings and probably saw a few good films. You'll find out when you read their articles.

And we have a few in-person events planned this year. Our first is a panel discussion on **Social Media and Animation** with **Patrick Smith** and others at the Hudson Park Library in the West Village. See our Events page and socials for the details.

Lastly, a big thank you to **Emmett Goodman** who is stepping down as Social Media Director. Emmett was the driving force behind our renewed online presence and a more fantastic job he couldn't have done.

As always, hope to see you soon.

Membership Rate Change

I know you know that NYC is one of the most expensive cities in the world. It's definitely the most expensive city in the US. What you might not know is that ASIFA-East has the lowest chapter membership rate in the US. Lower than Hollywood, South, Central and Colorado.

We've been able to keep it low because we had a lot of in-kind support from other institutions but, because of COVID, we lost a lot of that. And items like room rentals, insurance, food and drink, etc. are just getting more expensive. So to be able to continue to program the events we have planned, we're raising our rates to:

\$35 - Student and Senior
\$65 - Full Membership

Both tiers will include International membership and the benefits that come with it. Thanks for your continued support.

INTERNATIONAL REPORT

Chapters all over the world voted for in the new, and in some cases, returning International Executive Board members.

President - Anastasia Dimitria
Secretary General - Agnes Li
Treasurer - Stefan Stratil
Director of Technical Operations - Corrie Francis Parks
Prize Prize Director - Nancy Phelps
International Animation Day Director - João Appolinário

Congratulations to the new board and onward to greener pastures for the ASIFA community worldwide!

FIGURE DRAWING

Last Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm
Titmouse Studios

150 W 30th St, between 6th and 7th. 10th floor



Figure drawing sessions are offered to members first by email.
If all the spots aren't filled close to the date, the sign up will be opened to the public on our socials.

EVENTS

MADE IN NEW YORK: BEST OF NYC INDIE ANIMATION

at the
METROGRAPH

Saturday September 13

5:00 pm

Two abundantly talented stalwarts of the NYC animation scene, Bill Plympton and Signe Bauman, have teamed to assemble a program of some of the finest (and most outrageous) work to emerge from artists living and working in the Big Apple, and will be coming to Metrograph to introduce a one-of-a-kind evening of stubbornly individualistic toons, with a number of the participating filmmakers also present. Not the sort of stuff you're likely to catch on Saturday morning, kids!

"This program showcases just a sliver of the best NYC indie animation: some of the films are Oscar winners, others are made by animation newcomers, but they all share the sense of wonder, adventure and perfect NYC timing to make you laugh, cry and be entertained." — Signe Bauman

SOCIAL MEDIA PANEL DISCUSSION

Saturday September 13

11:00 am



New York
Public
Library

Hudson Park Library
66 Leroy St. (West Village)

A panel discussion with animators about the importance of online presence, how to successfully promote your work and how to turn a profit.

Featuring panelists Patrick Smith, Nate Ziller, Desmond Du, Staci Henry-Ramos and Peter Casey. Combined they have millions of YouTube subscribers, hundreds of thousands on TikTok and tens of thousands Instagram followers.



ANNECY INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION FILM FESTIVAL

A REVIEW OF SHORT FILMS PROGRAMMING

By Mike Enright



For one week in June, 18,200 festivalgoers from 118 countries descended upon Lake Annecy, France for the massive 2025 edition of the Annecy International Animation Film Festival and its accompanying marketplace, the Mifa. This article, from the point of view of a Brooklyn animator, is focused on the short film selections and how they are curated around a theme.

I started with "Commissioned Films in Competition", 35 animated spots from around the world with a cornucopia of techniques. Cesar CABRAL's stacked paper cut-outs animation opened with a piece for Vinheta CineSesc in San Paolo, Brasil. Anthropomorphic balls of wool sung their history in Suresh ERIYAT's award-winning "Desi Oon". TED-Ed's well-researched "Three Sisters – When Ancient Wisdom Beats Modern Industry" by Luisa HOLANDA, and an out of this world "Starpets Teaser" by Stéphane BERLA joined in the rapid fire parade of animated spots. The music videos "Mon Algorithme à moi" by Benjamin EFRATI and animated by Balázs TURAI, Sis' "Bow to Your Wilderness" by Danski TANG, and Naive New Beaters, Star Feminine Band's "Ye Kou Si Kuo" directed by Lola LEFÈVRE all proved that the animated music

video is alive, well, and peaking on hallucinogens.

Recently, many shorts have been getting longer and thus more challenging to fit into a program. “Shorts Films Official 1” was an example of this trend: with five films, around 15 mins each. The jewel being Chris LA-VIS and Maciek SZCZERBOWSKI’s exquisitely crafted puppet film: “La jeune fille qui pleurait des perles”. Other titles jumped around thematically from tender to absurd, to frantic, to grim, closing with “Star Wars: Visions ‘Black’”, an opus of visual assault. I wonder if these films were programmed together solely due to their lengthy run times.

“Shorts Films Official 2” was a collection of tormented histories. It featured a tapeworm that consumed a world famous diva and a POV journey through the radioactive rubble of Chernobyl. The awe from witnessing these exquisitely illustrated, yet painful, memories was often met with violently screeching soundtracks. Janneke SWINKELS and Tim FRIJSINGER’s puppet film “Zwermen” was a tranquil closer and a welcome relief.

“Fine Art and Animation”, part of the Tribute to Hungarian Animation programming, was mesmerizing! Films like “A Szél” by Csaba VARGA, “Garabonciák” by Dóra KERESZTES and István OROSZ, and “Holtágbán” by Tibor BÁNÓCZKI reminded me why I love the craft so much.

“Short Films Official 3” was a technicolor labyrinth of despair and hopelessness. Caroline POGGI and Jonathan VINEL’s “La Fille qui Explode” illustrated this dystopia very well, with a revolving door of characters and events confronting a desensitized heroine who routinely detonates into a pile of gore. Also in the lineup were Jenny JOKELA’S “Dollhouse Elephant”, a rainbow community mural alive with conflict, and Stéphanie LANSQUÉ and François LEROY’s “Quai Sisowath”, a metaphor for contagion horror painted with jaundiced hues and excessive blood.

Speaking of cartoon body fluids, the Titmouse sponsored late night screening of WTF2025 oozed with mayhem. A 17-film celebration of the weird and wonderful started the party with a live floor show before a full house of howling festival goers. Highlights included Veronica KEDAR’s “Kasey Cartoon”, Marten VISSER’s “Skroll” and Yasuteru OHNO’s “Mamiko’s Poop”. NYC was represented here by Michael Augustine DONDERO and Shengnan DONG’s “Nostril”, Izzy CHAVEZ’s “Adam and Eve in the Kingdom of Animals”, and ASIFA-East’s John W. LUSTIG, in attendance to present his film, “I Beg Your Pardon”.

We also met Meejin Hong who animated Deluge, a hand drawn film that used 24 frame loops to create a complex web of animation. After talking, we realized that we had gone to the same graduate school, CalArts, and had some of the same professors. Animafest was a place to meet new people and also discover common pasts.

We attended several lectures. One by Corrie Francis Parks, on the origins of sand art and connecting it to today’s sand art and animation. As well as Aline Helmcke, who examined Disney’s studio system and how current studios and animators have adapted to create their own approach, creating more spontaneity while maintaining the order we need in animation. Outside of the lecture hall were artwork and props from animations, which were wonderful to see.



I also attended the ASIFA General Assembly. Members from around the world gave highlights of their chapters and discussed issues of concern. Each seemed to want to recruit new members, create community at home and abroad (an international community) and deal with technology pros and cons. It was a warm embrace of the international society.

At 10 pm, there was a party, either at the Cafe T&D or at the AKC Attack bar, a bit reminiscent of CBGBs. At AKC Attack, they screened short animations from the festival and attendees picked up instruments and jammed, creating new soundtracks. My 20 year old son actually got things started by playing electric guitar and bringing the crowd inside.

It was wonderful to see so many films and techniques - drawn, 3D, stopmotion, and the many combinations of all of them. The people were friendly and talkative. The films were sometimes playful or serious. The festival and the city were welcoming and made quite an impression.

We stayed at the Garden Hotel, which accommodated many of Animafest's guests. At breakfast, we often saw and talked to many of the animators - discussing films from the previous night, techniques and lectures. Each morning we would pour over the program and figure out what screenings and lectures to attend.

The categories were The Grand Competition Feature and Short, Student Films, Croatian Films, The World on Edge, World Panorama, Focus on South Korea, and Films for Children and Youth. One of our favorites was *Impossible Journey*, about the inequity of childbirth for women of color. A gorgeously tactile film with a serious message, referenced from a support group in NYC. The film used paint on paper to contrast 2 storks delivering babies and their journeys. The directors, Daniella Schuarts and Leonardo Salomao, known as Yuca were in a Q & A after the film and then we saw them at the Animafest picnic at Park Ribnjak the next day. They showed us the film in progress and the technique - animated, printed on paper, painted by hand and shot. It brought back memories from days past, like rows of painted cels drying before being filmed. Coincidentally, they are working on a 50th anniversary spot for "The Ring", referencing MTV's *Celebrity DeathMatch* (from the 1990s-2000s), for which my husband, Eliezer Medina, did the EFX!

Bobel's Kitchen by Fiona Rolland of Belgium, was another standout. Using mushroom characters to symbolize people who were ostracized for having AIDS in the 1980s. The stopmotion animation was charming and heartwarming. She talked about how she started out making dioramas and sets and someone suggested making them move. Voila: animation! She also brought the main puppet with her to show everyone.



"Short Films Official 4" presented six films that put women in the spotlight. It delivered some of the most beautiful and heartbreaking work in this year's competition, namely Rand BEIRUTY's animated documentary, "Shadows" and Pooya AFZALI's "At Night". The puppet films "Sulaimani", by Vinnie Ann BOSE and "Mangittatuarjuk" by Louise FLAHERTY were also noteworthy, making this screening one of this year's strongest collections.



Midweek I attended The ASIFA Global Meet and Greet. It was an opportunity to mingle by the lakeside with fellow ASIFA members and learn about our organization's role in shaping the festival as we know it today. The energy was uplifting and restorative, as members from around the world celebrated the idea that animation can bring people together.

The enchanting "Shorts Films Official 5" brought the fantasy for audiences who seek magic in animated films. A pinscreen film, "Les Bottes de la nuit" by Pierre-Luc GRANJON, which took home three awards at the festival, started the adventure. This was followed by Michael GRANBERRY (Jury Award) "Les Bêtes", an homage to Ladislav Starevich's puppet films. At 24 minutes the Croatia/France/Romania effort, "The Magicianul" by Bogdan MURESANU, felt more like a featurette than an unduly stretched out short film. The seance ended with the reanimating of phenakistoscopes in Thomas RENOLDNER's "Stampfer's Dreams".



“Short Films Official 6” consisted of seven films highlighting heart and humor in the challenges of daily life. It started off looking inward with Yoriko MIZUSHIRI’s “Ordinary Life”, a somewhat playful follow-up to her 2021 film “Anxious Body”. This piece brought us in close to examine small and graceful movements. Then, through a succession of tales about work, life, and family, the program made its way to outer space with the musically driven stop-motion comedy “Signal” from Emma CARRÉ and Mathilde PARQUET.

The final shorts screening I attended this year was “Short Films - Off Limits”, a lineup of experimental animation. Pink TWINS collaboration “Firewalk” opened up with a hypnotizing study of a brush fire. The tongue-in-cheek “Gerhard” by Ulu BRAUN received as many jeers as it did chuckles for its self-aware poke at AI. My personal favorite was “Capriccio”, a simple ink wash study of a flying bird by Gábor ULRICH. The final film of the program was “Este no es tu jardín” by Carlos VELANDIA, a flight through thousands of points of lights that reveal themselves to be the map of fauna going extinct. While watching, I reflected on the many experiences and perspectives that the Annecy International Animation Film Festival offers. My own being just one of those many particles that make up the impression of a whole.

ANIMAFEST 2025

FESTIVAL WRAP-UP

By Jackie Ross



Animafest 2025 was an unforgettable experience. The people were warm and welcoming with smiles, information, maps and a cool drink for warm days and nights. The various venues, screenings and lectures, and parties in the evening, were spread throughout the city.

Lots of animators from around the world were in Zagreb, an old world city that charmed us all. Walking daily to the venues, we passed the Opera House, a baroque 3 floor building with gardens, often hearing beautiful voices floating out from the upper windows. The small roads led to open plazas with musicians playing, street cafes and delicious gelato. Zagreb has the most museums per square feet/meters in the world and we went to a few - the HaHa Museum of Comedy and the Chocolate Museum. The tie was invented in Croatia. When men went to war, their wives tied cloth around their necks to remember them by AND to let others know that they were taken. The streets were always bustling with various food and flower markets. Croatia is rated the safest country in the world.